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Boston police kill man in Dorchester shoot-out

DA to review 'fatal use of force' near party

By Matt Rocheleau | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 02, 2013

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Boston Police officers shot and killed a 37-year-old man after he allegedly fired at officers outside a party in Dorchester early Sunday morning, according to authorities. The victim had not been identified by police as of Sunday night, pending notification of his next of kin.

Suffolk District Attorney Daniel F. Conley announced that his office will investigate the police shooting, calling the probe "a standard procedure for the fatal use of force."

“The community can count on a full and impartial investigation by our office,” Conley said in a statement.

The shoot-out happened just before 2 a.m. on Willowood Street, near where the Dorchester and Mattapan neighborhoods meet. When police officers from District B-3 in Mattapan/Dorchester responded to a call reporting gunshots, witnesses who had been at a nearby party told them that a man was shooting, according to a statement issued by the Police Department.

As officers approached, the man allegedly fired at them from a motor vehicle, the statement said. The officers returned fire and shot the man, who was later pronounced dead at Boston Medical Center.

About 25 minutes before the shoot-out, officers had gone to the same area for an earlier report of gunshots, according to the Police Department.

Conley’s statement said “civilian witnesses” told officers that the man had a handgun.

Neither Conley nor police said how many officers were involved in the shooting or how many shots were fired.

Several neighbors said they heard two clusters of several gunshots about 10 or 15 minutes apart.

Faith Jackson said she was sleeping in her home across the street early Sunday morning when she heard what sounded like “firecrackers.” She ignored the noise. But a couple hours later, she awoke again when her grandson called to say he could not get home because the street was a crime scene, blocked off by police.

Jackson looked out her window and saw several police cruisers lining the street and many officers, including some who were photographing the inside of a car that had all of its doors open. She said the car appeared to be a black sedan.

She said police remained there until at least 6:30 a.m.

Jackson, who declined to give her age but said she was a “senior citizen,” said she has lived on the street for 15 years and is not particularly worried by the shooting.

“I feel safe,” said Jackson, standing on the front steps of her home. “[But] I would like to know what happened.”

Conley said his office’s investigation, led by Assistant District Attorney Edmond Zabin, will be

“transparent.”

“As we have in prior investigations of police-involved shootings, community stakeholders, and members of the media will have the opportunity to review our findings when the probe is complete,” Conley’s statement said.

Zabin, chief of the homicide unit in the district attorney’s office, went to the scene shortly after the shooting and remained there through much of the morning.

The Boston Police Department’s Internal Affairs Unit is also investigating the shooting. Officer James Kenneally said department protocol dictates that any officer involved in such an incident would be assigned to administrative duty during the investigation.

Residents appeared to be partaking in typical summer activities Sunday afternoon, with frequent police cruisers patrolling the block and a small memorial of candles on the sidewalk.

Many neighbors sat outside on porches and stoops of the two- and three-story homes that line Willowwood Street. In one front yard, more than a dozen adults and children were having a barbecue.

At the corner of Willowwood and Ballou Avenue, several people stood around the candles.

A woman who lives a few houses away from the shooting said she was in her bedroom when she heard numerous gunshots, followed by sirens and then more gunshots.

She said she did not dare go outside or even look out the window.

“People around here have bad aim,” she said, “I mind my business.”

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele).

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